

RESOLUTION NO. 99-168

RESOLUTION OF THE MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

WHEREAS, dioxin is a chemical which is a known human carcinogen, and has also been linked to endocrine disruption, endometriosis, reproductive abnormalities, decreased fertility, testicular atrophy, immune system impairment, and neurotoxicity. Children, infants and fetuses are especially vulnerable to dioxin exposure; and

WHEREAS, dioxin has no commercial or industrial use. It is created and released to the environment when chlorinated waste is burned, and when other organic chemicals that contain chlorine are manufactured, including polyvinyl chloride ("PVC"); and

WHEREAS, dioxin is now ubiquitous in the worldwide environment and is found in the tissue of all people, regardless of where they live on earth. Ambient environmental concentrations are already at levels which cause effects in laboratory animals. Dioxin is both persistent in the environment and bioaccumulates in the body fat of humans and animals; and

WHEREAS, over ninety percent of people's body burden comes through their diet. Human breast milk is among the most contaminated foods. Dioxin is found in the breast milk of women worldwide, and nursing infants take in 50-100 times more dioxin than adults; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") estimates that the lifetime risk of getting cancer from dioxin exposure is above generally accepted safe levels. The EPA has designated dioxin in San Francisco Bay as a high priority for immediate action to restore water quality and protect public health. Dioxin contamination in fish reaches health advisory levels throughout the Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, many professional associations have already passed resolutions which agree on the need to reduce or eliminate dioxin in the environment, including the American Public Health Association, the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes, the California Medical Association, the Chicago Medical Society, and the Minnesota Medical Association; and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area city governments of Oakland, San Francisco and Berkeley have already passed resolutions whose intent is the elimination of dioxin emissions wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, because dioxin is a clear threat to public health and the environment, a precautionary approach with a goal of zero exposure is the only strategy that truly protects public health.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Marin will encourage elimination of dioxin emissions wherever possible and will work with other local governments to convene a regional task force to identify and quantify the sources of regional dioxin pollution, including sources from all municipal practices; to develop dioxin pollution prevention strategies along with any associated cost implications, and to make any further recommendations to implement the intent of this resolution to eliminate dioxin emissions.

